



News Release

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Medical marijuana: substandard authorizations lead to nurse suspension

Case also leads to unlicensed practice cease-and-desist order for clinic owner

OLYMPIA — Registered nurse and advanced registered nurse practitioner Sharol L. Chavez (RN00127449, AP30004745) from Thurston County has been immediately suspended on charges of sub-standard care in medical marijuana authorizations. Charges of unprofessional conduct by the Nursing Commission say Chavez didn't meet the standard of care in treating patients while she worked at South Sound Medicine in Lacey and while operating her own clinic.

According to the statement of charges, most of Chavez' practice at South Sound Medicine involved patients seeking authorizations for medical marijuana. In treating these patients Chavez allegedly didn't adequately review medical histories, document patient examinations, and inform patients of other treatment options. The charges say she authorized medical marijuana for patients who were not qualified, and didn't document treatments she attempted before authorizing medical marijuana.

While operating her own clinic Chavez allegedly issued medical marijuana authorizations, prescription refills, and prescriptions for narcotics without proper patient examinations. Charges say that in some cases Chavez never saw patients, and was aware that some of her prescriptions were supplying Oxycodone pills to the illegal marketplace.

Chavez is also charged with aiding and abetting the unlicensed practice of medicine by allowing South Sound Medicine owner Paul Wendler to control the timing and methods of patient care. Wendler has no health care credential in Washington and the state Department of Health has issued notice of intent to seek a "cease and desist" order under unlicensed practice laws. In operating the clinic in Lacey, Wendler allegedly interfered with the practice of at least two licensed health care professionals, including Chavez; exerted control over patient care; had inappropriate access to patient records; and wouldn't let licensed staff have access to the records.

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The charges against Wendler say he established the expiration date for medical marijuana authorizations, determined patient treatment intervals, and ordered lab work for patients.

Wendler has 20 days to respond to the allegations and request a hearing.

Chavez also has 20 days to request a hearing to contest the charges. She cannot practice as a nurse or nurse practitioner in Washington until the charges are resolved.

The documents can be seen online by clicking “Look up a health care provider” on the [Department of Health website](#). Copies of documents can be requested by calling 360-236-4700. The number can also be used to file complaints against health care providers in Washington.

The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission protects public health and safety in Washington by regulation of nursing practice. The commission establishes, monitors, and enforces qualifications for licensing, consistent standards of practice, continuing competency, and discipline.

The Department of Health protects and promotes public health, safety, and welfare in Washington by regulating the competency and quality of health care providers. The agency establishes, monitors, and enforces qualifications for licensing, consistent standards of practice, continuing competency mechanisms, and discipline. Rules, policies, and procedures promote the delivery of quality health care to people in Washington.

The [Department of Health website](#) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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